JUL 2 8 1930

THE TUILERIES BROCHURES

A SERIES OF MONOGRAPHS
ON EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO ROOFS OF TILE

SOME DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE IN SURREY AND SUSSEX

TEXT BY

W. POPE BARNEY

JULY 1930

THE TUILERIES BROCHURES

EDITED BY WILLIAM DEWEY FOSTER A·I·A

PHOTOGRAPHS BY F. R. YERBURY HON. A·R·I·B·A

VOLUME II JULY 1930 NUMBER 4

SOME DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE IN SURREY AND SUSSEX

TEXT BY

W. POPE BARNEY, A.I.A.

PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY BY

LUDOWICI-CELADON COMPANY

MAKERS OF IMPERIAL ROOFING TILES

FOR DISTRIBUTION AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION

Copyright 1930 *by the Ludowici-Celadon Company*

A SHOP IN GODSTONE, SURREY

JULY 1930

SOME DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE IN SURREY AND SUSSEX

By W. POPE BARNEY, A.I.A.

THE original country-side of Sussex was heavily forested in early times and at one period contained the Birmingham of mediæval England, carrying on an enormous trade in iron. These forests were full of charcoal burners and the products of those days of primitive casting still remain to us in many of the churches, where on the floors of the chancel and nave are to be seen scores of finely executed iron slabs with lettering and rich heraldic charges modelled in strong relief. As the forests were cut down and the process of extracting the ore was found to be so much more profitable when done with coal as a fuel, this original iron smelting, which lasted well up into the seventeenth century, was abandoned as a local industry.

For this reason most of the half timber work is of a very early period. In the old houses, the shrinkage of the wood timbers, as the years went on, developed leaks, so native tiles were used to hang over the original walls, or else a coat of plaster was applied to the entire outside of the building. This covering of the timber explains why so comparatively little of the old work is to be seen today. An interesting side-light indicating the presence of the forests in early times is found in the persistence of the "dene," the old word for woods, in so many of the village names, as Rottingdene, Ovingdean, Westdean, etc.

Because of the change from a manufacturing to an agricultural country, the development of the architecture has remained static for the last two or three hundred years; and having no "black country" to mar the landscape, the district becomes a mecca for walking and bicycling trips. To the architect, especially, the attractions are manifold. Here, as perhaps nowhere else, except in the Cotswold Hills, one finds clearly exemplified a truth which all architects must be aware of but seem loth to put into practice: that is, that in the straightforward, sturdy construction of the English villages where no attempt has been made to recall the superficial details of architecture in some other locality, is to be found a beauty and a good taste often lacking in more learned work. Frequently many of the canons of the schools are broken by the old builders of these rather primitive cottages, and yet how satisfying are the results. Theoretically, they have done what they should not do in matters of composition and design, but because their buildings are based upon a simple honesty of construction and directness of solution, they have a freshness and a charm that are almost unknown in contemporary work.

This directness of solution of their housing problems seems often quite extravagant, according to our thought today. For instance, the great roof space, which was rarely pierced by gables or dormers, we think of as being extremely wasteful, particularly when one compares it with the large amount of housing that is accomplished above the eave line in the architecture of the Cotswolds. Perhaps, however, our forefathers' logic was not as poor as it seems at first blush. Material for walls was not plentiful. Gable ends became quite a problem, as did the complication of roof construction around the dormers, and it is not at all improbable that in the days in which they were built, what appears today to be extravagant, was really the most economical use of the materials at hand.

It is probably because we instinctively feel that these old builders have done the best they could with the limitations of their times that we have so sincere a regard for the products of their brains and hands. The ingenuity with which they met odd complications of structure or site is a never-ending source of pleasure. The great diversity in handling the small details of or-

namentation and decoration is astounding, considering the general uniformity of mass and type in their buildings. We feel that in design these buildings show the same unconscious spontaneity which we associate with the mentality of an unaffected and intelligent child, a certain fearlessness in going directly at the subject and unfailing delight in their individual solution of problems that are as old as the hills.

In addition to the use of tile in many roofs, a considerable number of the houses in Sussex are covered with a Horsham stone slate. Not infrequently these slate roofs have been repaired with tile in a way that gives a charming effect. The charm, doubtless due in part to the mellowing effect of age on the contrasting colours, and in part to the naivety of the rustic builder, whose motive was expediency rather than appearance,—so that the copying of it in modern work would only result in affectation. Frequently these stone slates, because of their considerable weight, have necessitated a flattening of the slope of the roof in order that the strain put upon the pegs holding them in place should not be too great. This lowering of the slope has resulted in a less weather proof quality and frequently the joints of the slate have been pointed up with mortar, which gives a texture and play of color quite unique. As a rule, the tiles used for hanging on the walls were more carefully selected than those for the roofs, and were bedded solidly in mortar, making an absolutely waterproof construction. They were carried up close against the window frames without mouldings or finishing of any kind. Ordinarily the tiles were rather closely hung on the walls, which gave a certain compact look to the structure very characteristic of the locality.

In northeastern Sussex, in the charming village of East Grinstead, is to be found that "haunt of ancient peace," Sackville College. The name is somewhat misleading to our ears, as its reason for being is to provide shelter in their declining years for eleven old folk: five brothers and six sisters, who, together with the warden and his assistant, inhabit the quadrangle and its surrounding buildings. It is typical of so many similar foundations throughout England, where the wisdom and benevolence of our forefathers found expression in beautiful structures, skilfully grouped about large courtyards which were planted with emerald green turf. Here the noise and distractions of the outer world are shut out and one finds that same sense of absolute seclusion and quiet which breathes from the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge and the Almshouses of St. Cross, near Winchester.

The buildings of Sackville College are particularly interesting as being in a style practically universal in all the counties of England during the Tudor period. There is some variety in the different buildings of this group, but also a similarity which gives a stability of sound architectural taste that is an inspiration to the architect of today, who is too often prone to feel that picturesque charm can only be gotten by excesses of eccentricity and illogical masses. Here the fenestration, as in the architecture of the Cotswold Hills, has a uniform basis of measurement, giving unity of scale to the entire group. The roofs, quietly harmonizing with the walls below, their long restful lines broken only by massive chimneys of brick and the most restrained use of intersecting ridges, are replete with repose. The doorway, showing decent familiarity with classical precedent, adds a note of continental learning which brings a certain sophistication to an otherwise naively simple piece of indigenous architecture.

Out from Godstone, in Surrey, is found the delightfully picturesque architecture of farmstead and manor, having great, unbroken tile roofs which, not content with covering the top, show an inclination to creep down over the second floor walls to the heads of the windows below. Here is seen a definite and local predilection for softening the lines of the roof by hips instead of gables. It is rather interesting to speculate on the origin of this. Does it come simply from the utilitarian desire to save the material by erecting the gable wall on a slope, or is it some instinctive feeling that the long, easy undulations of the neighboring countryside are most gracefully reflected in the roof line which has the sharp accent of gabled ends removed? Whatever its reason, the result is very characteristic of the locality and, as a suggestion for American domestic architecture of today, has been but little heeded.

Both Surrey and Sussex still retain a certain amount of half timber work, as do all the counties of England which were once covered by forests, but in Sussex particularly, one finds the partiality for the hipped roof and the avoidance of the gable end accent. The chimneys of both counties show what, to our eyes, seem in photographs tremendously heavy top hampers, but when actually seen, one feels these to be quite a part of the general substantiality above the eave line.

In bicycling through this beautiful, hilly countryside, one constantly comes upon unexpected charm: the roadside cottages with their rows of casement windows and delightful little flower gardens, and the touches of clipped box or yew which reflect the rigidity of the house as it merges with the landscape, are a continual joy and refreshment as one rides along,—regretting that the days have only sixteen hours of daylight and that vacations come but once a year and then are not all spent in England. Then one feels how true

OAST HOUSES, TYPICAL OF THE SOUTHEASTERN COUNTIES

are the words of that great lover of the old cottages of England, Mr. Guy Dawber: "Go where you will amongst these old villages and country towns and contemplate any old building, untouched by the hand of the 'restorer' and it is impossible not to be impressed by its beauty and subtle charm: the mullioned windows and latticed frames, the tiled roofs, a kaleidoscope of varied colors, the venerable walls covered with lichens, the absence of any meretricious or needless ornament and the wonderful feeling of homeliness that pervades every feature, all combine to produce the very essence of simple and beautiful architecture."

ENTRANCE FACADE, SACKVILLE COLLEGE, EAST GRINSTEAD, SUSSEX

VIEW IN QUADRANGLE, SACKVILLE COLLEGE, EAST GRINSTEAD, SUSSEX

DETAIL, SACKVILLE COLLEGE

DETAIL AT GODSTONE, SURREY

THE VICARAGE, HARTFIELD, SUSSEX

FARM COTTAGE IN *SUSSEX*

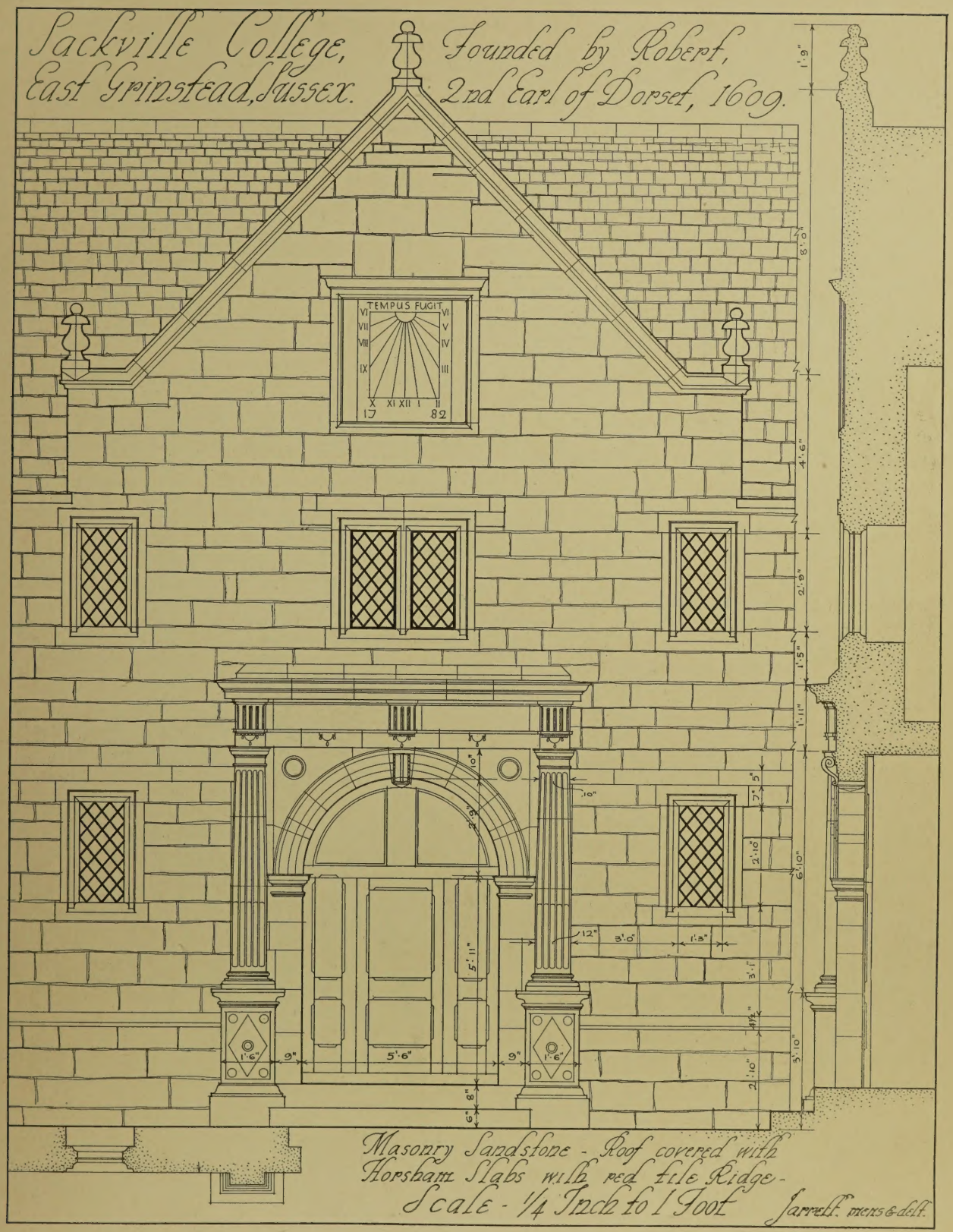
COTTAGE NEAR GODSTONE, SURREY

HOUSE NEAR GODSTONE, SURREY

HOUSE AT ROBERTSBRIDGE, SUSSEX

HOUSES AT EAST GRINSTEAD, SUSSEX

MAIN ENTRANCE, SACKVILLE COLLEGE, EAST GRINSTEAD, SUSSEX


Sackville College,
East Grinstead, Sussex.
Founded by Robert,
2nd Earl of Dorset, 1609.
TEMPUS FUGIT
17 82
Masonry Sandstone - Roof covered with
Horsham Slabs with red tile Ridge -
Scale - 1/4 Inch to 1 Foot
Jarrett. mens & delt.

SEE ILLUSTRATION ON OPPOSITE PAGE

This detail of a farm group on Long Island shows IMPERIAL Roofing Tiles laid on the tower in the same manner as on the old towers abroad. All the tiles were of the same size, being cut at the job to fit the narrowing surface. The final effect has produced the same beauty of texture and color to be found in the old roofs of England.

LUDOWICI-CELADON COMPANY

Makers of IMPERIAL Roofing Tiles

CHICAGO: 104 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE

NEW YORK: 565 FIFTH AVENUE

WASHINGTON: 738 FIFTEENTH STREET, N.W.

The Marchbanks Press, New York